

DCI

NSPG Meeting

Lebanon

24 February 1984

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NSC MTG.  
"principals  
plus  
one"

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SA/DCI/IA

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## NSPG Meeting on Lebanon

24 February 1984

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DCI Talking Points used at 24 Feb 84 NSC  
on Lebanon.

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23 February 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: SA/DCI/IA

SUBJECT: NSPG on Lebanon

1. You are scheduled to attend an NSPG on Lebanon from 1:45 to 2:45 in the White House Situation Room. The President will be chairing and it will be a principals only session.

2. We have received little on this meeting, in fact, only the most cursory of agendas, which is at Tab A. [redacted]

[redacted] --but again that is only a rumor. The cursory agenda that we have received does indicate that you will be expected to provide an intelligence update on Lebanon.

3. Included in this package are the following:

-- Tab B contains your talking points on the current situation in Lebanon--these have been prepared by DDI/NESA.

-- [redacted]

-- Tab D contains a think-piece prepared by Graham Fuller. Graham's paper consists of two longer papers and a two-page overview which I think you should look at. Graham believes that, while round one may be over, the US will be forced to confront Syria in Jordan and perhaps in the Persian Gulf in the months ahead. He has some suggestions about how we want to handle that confrontation.

-- [redacted]

-- At Tab F is an overview of the situation in Lebanon prepared by DDI/NESA. This is the same item cabled to you yesterday.

-- At Tab G are key NID [redacted] special features on the Lebanon situation.

*Now changed to an NSC to be attended by "Principal plus one"*

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*THE Requirement for an Intelligence Update has apparently been dropped as of this.*

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2. You are scheduled to meet at 12:30 in your office with [redacted]  
[redacted] Graham Fuller, and [redacted] The subject will be not only  
your NSPG on Lebanon but also your 4:15 meeting at the White House on the  
Iran-Iraq crisis.

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3. If I can do more to help, please call. Welcome back.

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cc: DDCI

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## LEBANON'S RELATIONS WITH SYRIA UNDER VARYING REGIMES

PERIOD	PRESIDENT	RELATIONS WITH SYRIA
1943-1952	Bishra Al-Khoury	Opposed to concept of greater Syria, but generally cooperative
1952-1958	Camille Chamoun	Resisted absorption by Syria, increasing strain culminating in Civil-War of 1958
1958-1964	Fouad Chehab	Cooperation and avoidance of antagonism
1964-1970	Charles Hilu	Maintain good relations, keep Lebanon independent
1970-1976	Suleyman Franjiyah	Strong resistance to Syria pressure, until period of civil war, then dependence
1976-1982	Elias Sarkis	Dependence but not subservience
August 1982-September 1982	Bashir Gemayel	Antagonistic , but not a complete break
September 1982-Present	Amin Gemayel	Strained with attempts to avoid Syrian interference in Lebanese internal affairs



February 23, 1984

(For use only upon Lebanese announcement of an understanding with Syria on Lebanese political reconciliation, including repudiation of May 17)

Proposed Q's and A's on the Repudiation of May 17

Q. What is your position on the May 17 agreement now that Lebanon has repudiated it?

A. As we have said, we believe it was a good agreement. It was an agreement between the two parties, however, and if one chooses to repudiate it, it is up to them to find another means to achieve the same ends.

Q. What was the U.S. role in the GOL decision? Were we consulted ahead of time, or just informed -- when?

A. The decision was taken solely by the GOL, and we were informed that it had been made. The GOL was well aware of our views on the May 17 agreement.

Q. When were you informed?

A. I am not going to get into the details of our discussions on this issue with the GOL, but it was shortly before the decision was made public.

Q. How does the GOL now plan to get the Israelis to leave?

A. As we have said before, an agreement existed which called for the removal of Israeli troops. If the agreement is repudiated, it is up to the parties involved to find new arrangements which would achieve the same goals.

Q. Will the U.S. help to negotiate the withdrawal of the Israelis from southern Lebanon now that the agreement has been repudiated?

A. As I said, if the agreement is repudiated, it is up to those who did so to make new arrangements to achieve the goals of the May 17 agreement.

-2-

Q. What is your policy toward Lebanon now that Gemayel has repudiated May 17?

A. Our policy remains the same. We favor the establishment of a strong central government and a process of national reconciliation, withdrawal of all foreign forces, maintenance of Lebanese sovereignty, and security arrangements for Israel's northern border.

Q. Do you continue to support the Government of Lebanon?

A. We will not abandon the legitimate government of Lebanon nor President Gemayel.

Q. What kind of support are you going to give?

A. The nature and extent of our support will depend on how the situation evolves.

Q. Will the ships remain deployed offshore?

A. As the President said on February 21, the ships will remain deployed off the coast of Lebanon. They will remain there as long as they can serve a useful purpose.

Q. What will be the rules of engagement on naval gunfire support?

A. The rules of engagement are based on the same principle we have always applied. Namely, we will take such steps as are necessary to ensure the safety and security of US personnel. When the ROE have changed in the past, they have done so in response to changes in the tactical situation, and they will continue to do so.

Q. Will you fire to protect the LAF at Suqal-Gharb?

A. Our response to such an event will obviously depend on the tactical situation at the time.

Q. What will happen to the Marine positions at the airport?

A. We are making arrangements to turn them over to the GOL.

Q. What is happening to the LAF training program?

A. The program obviously depends on having genuine training functions to perform. Once the situation on the ground clarifies, we will decide how best to proceed with the program.

Q. Are you going ahead with a security assistance program?

A. Yes, we are, of course, reviewing the program on a case-by-case basis until we see how the situation evolves on the ground in Lebanon.

Q. What will happen to our economic assistance program?

A. We still have the goal of helping Lebanon reconstruct itself. How that can best be done will obviously depend on what happens in the days ahead.

Q. What will the Israelis do now that the agreement is repudiated?

A. You will have to ask the government of Israel.

Q. Now that the agreement is repudiated, do you approve of actions Israel is taking to ensure its security in southern Lebanon?

A. Our policy objectives remain unchanged. They are: the reestablishment of a sovereign, independent country, and the removal of all foreign forces from Lebanon while ensuring the security of Israel's northern border.

Q. What will Ambassador Bartholomew's role be?

A. The Ambassador will continue to be involved diplomatically as he has been in the past.

Q. What will Ambassador Rumsfeld's role in Lebanon be?

A. The Ambassador's mandate has always included the general Middle East peace process as well as Lebanon. Lebanon will continue to be part of his larger responsibilities while he focusses on the more fundamental issues relating to the peace process.

Q. What effect will the repudiation have on U.S. credibility as a valued mediator in the Middle East?

A. We believe that all of the parties involved realize that the U.S. occupies a unique position in its ability to play a mediating role. We will continue to have that responsibility and the repudiation of the agreement will not, in any way, jeopardize our efforts.

Q. Are the Camp David Accords now in jeopardy?

A. No. We believe the Accords are still the best and most realistic basis for peace in the area.

Q. What have the Syrians agreed to as part of this understanding with Gemayel?

A. I refer you to the SARG for a response.

Q. What is your understanding of what else is involved in the agreement?

A. I refer you to the parties themselves.

Q. Have you discussed this with our MNF allies?

A. We remain in close touch with our MNF allies.

Q. Have you consulted with the Israelis on this decision?

A. Yes, We remain in close touch with the Government of Israel.

Q. Have you informed Congress?

A. We continue to keep members of Congress abreast of events as they happen.

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1984  
CABINET ROOM  
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Introduction (5 Minutes) .....Robert C. McFarlane
- II. Intelligence Update (5 Minutes).....William Casey
- III. Military Situation (5 Minutes).....Secretary Weinberger/  
General Vessey
- IV. Diplomatic Options (5 Minutes).....Secretary Shultz
- V. Discussion (30 Minutes)
- VI. Recommendations for Decision.....Robert C. McFarlane

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Middle East Situation Report #43  
(As of 1100 EST, 24 February 1984)

LEBANON/SYRIA

[redacted] said President Gemayel believes that the US has abandoned him and that he is under extreme, conflicting pressures from Syria, Israel, and hardline Christians. [redacted]

[redacted] certain that Gemayel will go to Damascus within the next two days to abrogate the 17 May agreement. [redacted]

-- Abrogation of the 17 May agreement and an accommodation with Syria risks a Christian extremist move against him. Failure to do so would risk full-scale Muslim military attacks on Suq al-Gharb, the Green Line into Christian East Beirut, and possibly his home town of Bikfayya north of Beirut. [redacted]

Evacuation of US Marines is continuing, and by the end of the day 600-750 should remain. [redacted]

The Saudi-mediated cease-fire has already been violated by several exchanges of artillery fire along the Alayh ridgeline and near the president's palace.

A press report says that Sunni religious and political leaders in Beirut called yesterday for "distinctive" ties with Syria and for the abrogation of the 17 May accord. (Press)

-- If accurate, this suggests that important segments of the Sunni community want to ally themselves with Syria and its allies. Such a move is likely to deepen the sense of panic in the Christian community. [redacted]

A report prepared by Israeli coordinator for Lebanese affairs Uri Lubrani indicates that Druze leader Junblatt holds little hope for Lebanon as an independent state. He believes the civil war will continue--even if the 17 May agreement is abrogated--because the demands of the various factions in Lebanon will take years to reconcile.

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-- Junblatt feels that the best solution is to forge a compromise--direct or indirect--between Syria and Israel for the partition of Lebanon.

-- Junblatt also claims that Palestinian "terrorists" are infiltrating into West Beirut with support from Sunni militias. He anticipates that fighting will soon break out between the Shia Amal and Palestinians.

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According to [redacted] Maronite Christians are convinced Gemayel is a failure but will resist opposition demands for his resignation because of the precedent for Muslims overturning a Christian president. [redacted] believe Christian extremists will try to topple or even kill Gemayel if he accepts a Syrian-imposed settlement.

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[redacted] Various factions--particularly the Christian Lebanese Forces militia and Amal leader Barri--are exploring the possibility of a political dialogue.

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[redacted] Libya has been shipping large amounts of military equipment to Lebanon this month.

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[redacted] most of the equipment is going to Junblatt. An armored column, probably consisting of 31 Libyan T-55 tanks and ten BMP infantry vehicles was traveling through Syria [redacted]

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-- The armor shipments are the largest yet noted from Libya. Libyan leader Qadhafi probably hopes to influence whatever regime replaces the Gemayel government. Damascus, anxious to protect its own influence over developments in Lebanon, is likely to resist Qadhafi's meddling.

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#### IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Iraqi and Iranian cities came under renewed artillery attacks Friday as fighting continues at Al Basrah and Chelat. [redacted] confirms Baghdad's claims that it stopped the Iranian assault east of Basrah and Iranian forces there are under heavy artillery bombardment. [redacted] journalists have confirmed Al-Qurna is still in Iraqi hands but that the Iraqis expect more Iranian attacks. Iraq bombarded Khorramadab and Borujerd Friday and claims to have downed an Iranian F-14. Iran claims to have destroyed two Iraqi divisions and to have captured

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five more Iraqi villages Friday in the battle area near Al Basrah. [REDACTED]

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-- Unless Iraqi commanders make serious errors, their forces should be able to stop the Iranian assault north of Al Basrah. Iraqi helicopter gunships should be able to disrupt Iranian supply lines, which must come over about eleven miles of marsh and swamp. [REDACTED]

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The International Red Cross is publicizing numerous violations of international law by Iran. Red Cross officials note Iranian mistreatment of a delegation sent to one of Iran's POW camps and Tehran's indoctrination of Iraqi POWs. Thursday Tehran radio reported that Iran has formally protested as "irresponsible practices" the decision by the Red Cross to publicize these accusations. [REDACTED]

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PERSIAN GULF

Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah pressed Syria to reduce its support for Iran. [REDACTED]

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-- Abdallah's willingness to risk antagonizing Assad--with whom he has close personal ties--underscores Riyadh's concern with Iran's growing military aggressiveness. [REDACTED]

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Conflicting reports about the latest Iranian attacks have prompted requests from Kuwaiti officials, local media representatives, and other diplomats for information on the fighting. [REDACTED]

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# Intelligence Briefing on Lebanon - 24 February 1984

The basic intelligence assessment at our headquarters this morning has Gemayel continuing to temporize in the face of disintegration of his army, the Shia takeover of West Beirut and widespread loss of confidence in his ability to make the necessary decisions as he remains torn between his need to satisfy the Druze and Shia demands and his fear of violent reaction from Christian hardliners while he hopes that US military and diplomatic actions will somehow save his government. The headquarters assessment is that it is unlikely that anything less than an accommodation to Syrian demands can salvage the Gemayel government. The Lebanese army is believe to have collapsed, its combat strength down from 17,000 a month ago to about 9,500 now, only half of which are seasoned troops on which the government can rely. The Eighth Brigade is threatened by and probably vulnerable to an armed Druze and Palestinian takeover around Suq el Garb which would threaten the Presidential palace.

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The question is how to stabilize the situation in order to arrest the erosion of confidence and explore these possibilities. Gemayel looks for a US-backed red line and political initiative. Fahd looks to persuading Syria that reconciliation around Gemayel

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Agenda for NSPG -- Friday, 24 February

Subject: Lebanon

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Intelligence Update
- (3) Military Situation
- (4) Diplomatic Options
- (5) Discussion
- (6) Recommendations for Decision

(Per Carol, NSC, 2/23/84)

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**NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING GROUP MEETING  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1984  
WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM  
1:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.**

**LEBANON**

**AGENDA**

**I. Introduction (5 Minutes).....Robert C. McFarlane**

**II. Diplomatic Options (5 Minutes).....Secretary Shultz**

**III. Military Situation (5 Minutes).....Secretary Weinberger/  
General Vessey**

**IV. Discussion (30 Minutes)**

**V. Recommendations for Decision.....Robert C. McFarlane**

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## THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 01267-83  
23 February 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Graham E. Fuller  
National Intelligence Officer for NESAs

SUBJECT: Key Issues for American Policy in Lebanon

1. With gradual US disengagement in Lebanon and the growing dominance of Syria over Lebanon politics, we face a new stage in Middle East politics. I attach a paper written a week or so ago on the problem of dealing with Syria after Lebanon. In a nutshell it suggests that round one is over but we will go on to face Syria in a serious confrontation in Jordan and perhaps in the Persian Gulf in the months ahead. The paper suggests that Lebanon has not been good turf for us to take on the Syrians and that our overall strategy against Syria must involve far broader action with the Arab world.

2. What do we do about Syria in Lebanon? At present there is a major debate underway within State Department over this question. Both Secretary Shultz and Lawrence Silberman (Rumsfeld's new deputy) feel strongly that the US should consider making life as difficult as possible for Syria in Lebanon. The purpose would be twofold: to make Lebanon difficult for Syria to digest and to distract Syrian energy and resources from other regional adventures as much as possible. Most of the working level policy people, however, would seem to believe that a stable Lebanon--even under Syrian tutelage--is more in our best long-term interests.

3. I have prepared a paper (draft attached) at the request of Shultz and Silberman dealing with organizing assets against Syria in Lebanon. As you will note, there are numerous elements within Lebanon which could be willing to stir up trouble for the Syrians. After reviewing the assets potentially available to us and the pros and cons of using them, the paper concludes that at best we would be only able to have limited effect upon Syria, would face risk of Syrian retaliatory action, and that in fact stability in Lebanon may be more to our interests than perpetuating conflict, civil war and greater options for the truly radical forces such as left wing PLO and Iranian radicals.

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4. The Community's best estimate is that Syria will basically strive to establish order in Lebanon--in its own interest--under more or less the traditional Lebanese confessional system. Syria would demand that this system be fundamentally responsive to Syrian security needs and have no special ties with Israel. We would foresee Lebanese administration of the state resembling fairly closely those of previous pro-Syrian governments in Lebanon such as under Suleiman Franjiyeh. If no political resolution can be reached which meets Syrian needs, the civil war will continue, disorder will increase, and the Syrian military might even have to intervene heavily again as they did in 1976, with US support. This time around it would be awkward for us to welcome further Syrian involvement in Lebanon, but Syria will be the only source which can restore order. The US and Israel are out of the picture. These issues need to be carefully considered as we move to a new stage in Lebanon.

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6. I cannot see major benefit for the US through permitting Gemayel to continue to believe that either the US or Israel is now in a position to save him from coming to terms with the confessional realities of Lebanon including Syria. The longer he waits, and the longer a real redivision of the political pie is delayed, the greater the likelihood of increased disorder and radicalization of factions. The LAF is now all but a Christian Phalange force perceived by the Arab world at large as a US-Israeli force designed to enforce its will on the Muslims. As undesirable a message as Syria's success in Lebanon is to the Arab world, prolongation of US efforts, with ever dwindling resources, to prop up an indecisive Gemayel presents an even worse picture to our Arab allies.

Graham E. Fuller

## Attachments:

- A. Paper on Dealing with Syria after Lebanon
- B. Draft Paper on Punishing Syria and Lebanon

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NIC 01267-83  
23 February 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Key Issues for American Policy in Lebanon

NIC/NIO/NESA:GEFuller:jcn 23 Feb. 84

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Attachments:

- A. Paper on Dealing with Syria After Lebanon
- B. Draft Paper on Punishing Syria and Lebanon

Distribution:

- 1 - Addressee w/atts
- 1 - DDCI w/att B
- 1 - SA/IA w/o atts
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- 1 - VC/NIC (HM) w/o atts
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1. A US Setback. Recent events demonstrate that Syria is very likely to have its way in Lebanon. The drawbacks for the US are obvious:

- Syria is the chief Soviet client in the Middle East and enjoys important Soviet backing.
- Syria is not likely to come to terms with Israel or with any of the US-sponsored peace plans in the near to mid term.
- Syria will in effect have had a "veto" over the prospects of Lebanese normalization of relations with Israel.
- Syria is the leader of a radical faction including Libya, PDRY and Iran, in opposition to moderate Arab states associated with the US.
- The success of Syria's policies in Lebanon will have impact on the moderate Arab states.

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3. Worse Options. The Lebanese conflict is probably winding down to stabilize itself under Syrian tutelage. As undesirable as this Syrian success is, we should keep in mind that the situation could be far worse and our interests far more seriously threatened:

- Syria does not seek to establish, nor would it tolerate, a revolutionary Marxist state establishing itself in Lebanon.
- Syria has no radical ideological ambitions in Lebanon, but rather seeks maintenance of the confessional rule mechanism--tilting in Syria's direction.
- Syria does not wish to see the Christians crushed or isolated because it would threaten the stability and balance of power within the state.
- Syria will not welcome Iranian radical agitation among the Shia community--once Syria has greater voice in the country and no longer needs Iran as an ally against the Gemayel government.
- Although Syria will seek to continue the struggle against Israel, it will maintain its traditional caution in allowing unauthorized or uncontrolled attacks against Israel to take place from Syrian-controlled Lebanon.

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- Syria will now have to devote greater resources to maintaining order rather than disorder in Lebanon and to adjudicating of conflicting confessional interests. The prospect of Lebanon under dominant Syrian influence should be acceptable from the vantage point of US interests.
- Even Israeli interests are served if Syria can avert really threatening possibilities such as permanently raging civil war, increasing radicalization of the Shia community and the prospects of a militant ideological anti-Western state.

4. An Ongoing Struggle with Syria. Syria is not a benign influence in the Middle East. Its success in Lebanon will not guarantee that it will now behave more generously towards other US goals in the region. On the contrary, Syria will continue to serve as a spoiler in most other arenas. The only good news is that Syria has less clout in those other arenas than it does in Lebanon.

5. Damascus will remain a radical rejectionist state. No foreseeable US policy in the region will meet Syria's needs. Syria's key interests and very raison d'etre spring from this rejectionist approach:

- Syria can justify its extensive arms support from the USSR--for use not only against Israel but against its Arab neighbors.
- Syria can demand and receive a flow of Arab Gulf money from states that both fear Syria and which prefer to pay Syria rather than "fight for the Arab cause" themselves.
- Syria can claim reason to seize control of the PLO to "coordinate the struggle" against Israel.
- Syria can claim a leadership role in the Arab world because of its continued dedication to the Arab cause.
- Syria can draw on the resources of other radical groups and countries, in the name of the struggle for Arab rights.

A Syria which were to sign peace with Israel would fade into the obscurity of a "me-too" member of a moderate Arab bloc dominated by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. For all of these reasons we must not expect that Syria will be satisfied with restoration of its traditional voice in Lebanon. We will have to face Syrian ambitions and interests elsewhere which will inevitably run counter to our own.

6. Syria's present position of dominance owes much to the absence of its traditional rivals: Egypt, sidelined by Camp David, and Iraq, preoccupied with the Gulf war. Nonetheless, we see the first glimmering of a re nascent moderate Arab coalition which can serve to stem Syrian ambitions. We need to encourage and stimulate this coalition and work with it creatively.

- The first Syrian setback in 18 months has come not from the New Jersey or the Lebanese Army but from moderate Arab states at the January Islamic conference which rebuffed Syrian/Libyan objections

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and brought Egypt back into the conference. The baleful principle of consensus in Arab decisionmaking was rejected in favor of simple majority decision. This may be an important precedent that will lead to reduction of radical veto moves towards normalization in Arab politics.

- Egypt is beginning to emerge back onto the scene, lending a vastly greater weight to the moderate camp and almost automatically moving into an anti-Syrian posture.
- Arafat, following his escape from Syrian clutches in Tripoli, seems willing to turn to Syria's enemies, Egypt and Jordan, to strengthen himself. The prospect of Egyptian participation in any Hussein/Arafat dialogue is a direct threat to Syrian interests and Syria knows it.

7. Jordan: The Next Round. The next major battle with Syria will come in Jordan. The battle lines are already being drawn. Even as Hussein merely prepares to hold serious exploratory discussions with Arafat, Syria will respond with force by:

- unleashing terrorist acts against Jordan, King Hussein and Jordanian diplomats;
- attempting to infiltrate radical PLO members into Jordan to attack Israel from Jordanian soil;
- assassinating Arafat and other PLO moderates inclined to negotiate;
- assassinating or intimidating moderate West Bank-Palestinian leaders who wish to negotiate with Israel through Jordan;
- establishing radical PLO camps along the Jordan border--already in process;
- massing Syrian military forces along Jordan's border; or
- actually invading Jordan.

8. Facing down Syria in Jordan will be a very different task for the US than in Lebanon.

- Jordan is a relatively homogenous country with no Shia population.
- Its leadership is strong and capable.
- Syria has almost no 5th columns within Jordan.
- Syria has no military presence or real sphere of influence within Jordan.
- The Jordanian Army is tough and well trained.

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-- Israel would be certain to want to stop a move by Syria to dominate Jordan.

-- Egypt will support Jordan.

A US stand against Syria in Jordan, therefore, makes much greater sense.

9. The Persian Gulf. Syria's second challenge to US interests will come in the Gulf. There, Syria is identified with support to Iran in the Gulf war. Syria is likely to work in tandem with Iran to assist in weakening Iraq as much as possible. It will attempt to intimidate Arab Gulf states which may increasingly look to the US for protection in any future escalation of the Gulf war. Just as Syria, at the very least, has tolerated Iranian activities against the MNF in Lebanon, Syria will probably encourage Iranian terrorism in the Gulf, if not support it. The instruments will be local Shia--dominated by Iran--and radical PLO--dominated by Syria. Syria will not tolerate Gulf acquiescence to Egypt's return to the Arab fold or permit sympathetic support for a Hussein/Arafat rapprochement.

10. The US will inevitably face these growing challenges from Syria if it attempts to move ahead with creating a moderate Arab coalition working towards a general peace settlement. Syria's own ambitions and interests are not likely to be accommodated by any US peace strategy. Syrian success in Lebanon has indeed further emboldened the Syrians, but a different outcome in Lebanon would not have changed Syrian goals in Jordan and the Gulf.

11. The Syrian-Iranian Axis. The marriage between Syria and Iran in Lebanon and the Gulf was not blessed by Allah, however. It is strictly of convenience and has many built in tensions which suggest it may not last long:

- In Lebanon a pro-Syrian government will soon turn against radical Iranian-inspired Shia action which threatens to upset the normal order of things; Syria may even wish to expel Iranian Revolutionary Guards from Syrian borders in the Bekaa.
- Syria and Iran both want Saddam Husayn in Baghdad to fall but will differ sharply over a successor regime; Syria will not accept a radical Islamic regime in Iraq.
- Iran ultimately can have no brief for the Syrian regime either; it is Arab nationalist, secular and brutally oppressive of the Muslim Brotherhood inside Syria.

12. A Moderate Arab Coalition. The US will need to look to the prospects of a moderate Arab coalition founded on Egypt, Jordan and Iraq--all of whom dislike Syria and have reason to block Syrian ambitions. Saudi Arabia is a potential member of this coalition and may tacitly support it but cannot be counted on to openly support an anti-Syrian cause (Saudi Arabia loathes any kind of open split in the Arab world because it forces them to make unwelcome and risky choices).

13. Egypt. We will need to devote greater attention to our investment in Egypt. Egypt under Nasser was an immense thorn in our side for nearly twenty years--during which we desperately sought some kind of influence over



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this most important Arab state. Now that we "have" Egypt, we must not neglect it but work with it creatively on Arab and African policy issues. To take our relationship with Egypt for granted is to waste a valuable asset and to risk Egypt's slipping away from Camp David out of frustration from its sidelined role.

14. Iraq. Iraq is locked in a struggle with Iran that will probably last at least a decade; (the geopolitical struggle is nearly 4,000 years old). Even if the war grinds to a de facto ceasefire, the struggle for the Gulf will continue. Iran has seized the revolutionary high ground. It seeks sweeping political and religious revolution throughout the Gulf which dwarfs Iraqi Ba'th Party revolutionary activities of the past. Iraq is now driven by necessity to support the moderate status quo. I believe we can count on a relatively benign Iraq for the foreseeable future which will at least acquiesce in American peace efforts in the region and may support them. This "Iraqi card" will last as long as Iran is driven by visionary Mullahs. We should take full advantage of Iraq's position in our policymaking in the decade ahead.

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17. The PLO. Even the PLO can be a moderating force in some respects whether we like it or not. If Arafat can bring himself to some working arrangement with Hussein, the PLO could serve to assist Jordan in monitoring Syrian/radical Palestinian operations against Jordan and the West Bank. The PLO after all knows its enemies within the ranks.

18. Although Israel claims it will have nothing to do with any PLO participation in the peace process, surely it is in Israel's interest to create splits among the Palestinians by accepting some cosmetic PLO role in the process rather than guaranteeing united PLO opposition.

19. The USSR. The USSR has marginally gained in Lebanon because of the success of its Syrian ally operating in its own backyard. By providing major weapons systems and a promise to defend Syrian territory, the USSR has been able to bolster long-standing Syrian ambitions. The victory is mainly a Syrian one, however, in that Soviet weaponry in Lebanon has not played the decisive role and Syria has called all the shots. Syria, and not the Soviets, will be the architect of its own Jordan and Gulf policies.

20. The USSR nonetheless is pursuing a relatively bankrupt strategy in the Middle East. The strategy is based almost exclusively on arms deliveries;

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the Soviets have few other resources. The USSR has successfully developed Syria as its major client state in the region but:

- it distrusts Syria and is fearful that Assad may "do a Sadat" some day and turn to the US;
- it is nervous about Syrian adventurism leading to conflict with Israel;
- the USSR has no leverage in Israel;
- it is frozen out of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states;
- it has lost the largest and most powerful Arab state, Egypt;
- it has been bereft of ideas on how to exploit US weaknesses in the Middle East as a whole. (Why has the USSR failed even to send a Soviet Rumsfeld to travel around the Middle East, ginning up its own peace plans and keeping US peace plans constantly off balance?)
- The USSR has precious little economic leverage with any state; its only "Marxist model" is the fly-blown basket case of Aden.

21. We have suffered a setback in Lebanon because we lacked the requisite resources to stymie larger Syrian assets. We will face Syria again another day on probably better turf, but we will need to play Arab politics more skillfully and intimately, mindful of the fact that dealing with the Arabs is always frustrating to some extent. No outside power has ever succeeded in the Arab world by pinning its ambitions on one state--and that goes for the Soviet Union as well. The wherewithal exists within the Arab world to patiently move forward towards a moderate Arab coalition which can create greater stability and limit Soviet opportunities for expansion.

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D R A F T

22 February 1984

Punishing Syria and Lebanon: Gains and Loses

1. Because of Syria's traditional involvement in Lebanon and its active military presence there for nearly a decade, Syria has developed many enemies in that country. In principle these enemies could be exploited to make life as difficult as possible for the Syrians, to tie up their resources, and to distract them from broader adventurism in the region. This paper outlines the potential resources available to US in weakening Syria--primarily in Lebanon--and assesses the relative gains versus loses.

2. Syria's Enemies. Although there are many elements and groups hostile to Syria in Lebanon they do not necessarily work in tandem. Groups which potentially could be exploited are:

-- Christian Right Wing: These elements have long opposed Syrian influence in Lebanon because of the threat to Christian, and especially Phalange, power. These elements exist primarily within the Christian Phalange forces (LF) or even among right wing Christian officers in the Lebanese Army. They could be encouraged to carry out terrorist attacks against the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

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-- Anti-Syrian PLO: The Arafat wing of the PLO (Fatah) is strongly anti-Syrian following the Syrian-supported rebellion within the PLO last year. The PLO unquestionably has the capability to strike the Syrians within Lebanon, within Syria, and abroad. The Arafat PLO on the whole may not be willing to break decisively with Syria, however, because of the importance of that country and its territory to the Palestinian movement. The PLO would not cooperate with Israel against Syria and would not assist the US in such an effort unless the US were to initiate a much closer relationship with the PLO. Some elements of the PLO probably will attack Syrian interests on the basis of their own interests.

-- Pro-Israeli Druze: Most Druze look to Syria strictly for protection against the Christians. There are elements among them, however, which are more oriented towards Israel--given the sizeable Druze population in Israel. Israel enjoys the most ready access to them.

-- Pro-Iraqi Elements: Iraq retains some influence in Lebanon, primarily through the Iraqi Ba'th party. Its area of greatest influence is in Tripoli. It would definitely be anti-Syrian in orientation, but almost surely would not cooperate with Israel. Cooperation with the US is questionable.

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- The Islamic Unification Group: This is a pro-Iranian but Sunni group in Tripoli which supported Arafat during the recent PLO mutiny and is strongly anti-Syria. Because of its religious orientation, it would not cooperate with Israel, however, and probably would not cooperate with the US.
- Other Anti-Syrian Groups: Small groupings of Sunni and Shia can probably be found who dislike Syria for a variety of reasons and who conceivably could join in anti-Syrian activity.

### 3. Third State Attacks Against Syria. Other countries conceivably could undertake attacks against Syria in Lebanon and elsewhere.

- Israel: Israel enjoys the greatest capability within Lebanon to undertake paramilitary or covert action against the Syrians and certainly has the will to do so. To date we are not aware of Israeli attacks against Syrians outside of Lebanon (such as assassination of Syrian diplomats).
- Iraq: Iraq is strongly motivated against Syria because of traditional rivalry and Syria's economic strangulation of Iraq through closure of the pipeline. Iraq has never shrunk from terrorist activity in the past and has even contested control over the Abu Nidal group with Syria. Iraq has the capability of attacking Syrian interests overseas but seems to have refrained from such terrorism in recent years. Iraq has its own agenda vis-a-vis Syria, however, and is unlikely to be strongly influenced by US urgings. Iraq would refuse to assist Israel in such a venture.
- Jordan: As Jordan becomes increasingly exposed to Syrian threats and attacks it could become motivated to strike back at Syria. Its assets in Lebanon would be few; its resources in Syria proper could be greater. Jordan probably would shrink from supporting major terrorism against Syria for fear of Syria's even greater capability in this area, but would be very open to consideration of this issue with the US.

### 4. Striking Syria Within Syria.

The Syrian regime has punished brutally any dissident elements which have threatened the state and will do so again if it is challenged. There is probably a considerable degree of unhappiness with the Assad regime among the public but widespread plotting or open rebellion is unlikely. Various ethnic groups have longstanding antipathy to the Assad regime such as the Kurds and anti-Ba'thi Alawites. The main opposition would come from Sunni Muslim Brotherhood elements. Such elements would be unlikely to readily cooperate with the US, however, and their own goals are not shared by the US.

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### 5. Military-Quasi-military Activity. Syria is surrounded by states which have numerous grievances against it and which do not wish it well.

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- Turkey is angered by Syrian support for Iraqi Kurdish movements (which directly threaten large areas of Turkish Kurdistan), Armenian terrorist groups (Asala), and radical Turkish anti-regime elements. In principle Turkey would be willing to show displeasure with Syrian activity through maneuvers on the border or even strikes against Syrian terrorist training camps along the Turkish border. Turkey fields its weakest army along the Syrian border and would probably not fare well against a direct Syrian counter-attack.
- Iraq: The Iran/Iraq war almost totally preoccupies Iraq's military capabilities, and it probably would be unwilling to open a second front against Syria. It could probably undertake some threatening military moves against Syria in conjunction with Syria's other neighbors, such as Turkey.
- Israel at any time could raise military tensions against Syria in Lebanon or along the Golan.

6. The Gains. The primary purpose of undertaking or stimulating anti-Syrian activity in Lebanon, in Syria, or elsewhere would be to blunt Syria's ability to threaten US interests and initiatives in the Arab world. A specific goal would be to induce Syria to lay off opposition to Egypt's return to the Arab world, to an Arafat/Hussein dialogue, to Jordan/Israel peace negotiations, and to Gulf state willingness to cooperate with the US on security matters. We judge that if the various strategies and tactics outlined above were to be employed they would seriously hinder Assad's freedom of maneuver and could lead to the downfall of his regime. The chances are, however, that most of the above alternatives will probably never work together sufficiently to bring serious change in Syrian policy. Even limited application of some of these tactics might distract Syria, however, and put it on notice that it is not exempt from doses of its own medicine.

7. The Down Side: Aside from the problems of coordinating such diverse efforts against Syria, numerous drawbacks exist in undertaking major destabilization efforts against Syria.

- Disorder in Lebanon: Syria will strive to maintain order in its own interests in Lebanon. Disorder would give play to:
  - the increasing radicalization of the Shia by Iran.
  - greater freedom of action for radical PLO.
  - possibly increased activity by other radical groups such as Armenians terrorists.
- Efficacy: Serious disorder in Lebanon would still probably not deter Syria from undertaking terrorist activity against Jordan, the moderate PLO, the Gulf states and others outside the country.

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- Syrian Retaliation: Syria will always retain a major capability to strike back at US and Western interests in Lebanon, in the Middle East, and elsewhere. Attacks seemingly inspired by the US against Syria would lead to retaliation. Syrian retaliatory capability would also frighten off most other potential anti-Syrian activists such as the Christian right and the pro-Israeli Druze who know that they cannot compete with Damascus in terror.
- What Follows Assad? The Soviets have long been well in place in Syria; it is their key card in the Middle East game. The USSR unquestionably must have contingency plans designed to cope with a post-Assad situation. Although the USSR may not be able to determine the outcome or control the process of Assad's collapse, it has considerable resources and strong incentive to insure that Assad's successor be at least as pro-Soviet as Assad and far less independent.

7. The Syrian Dilemma in Lebanon. Regardless of whether any external actors stir up trouble for Assad in Lebanon, Damascus will face a considerable number of problems in attempting to administer the Lebanese state in any case. It is easier to disrupt than to build. With Syrian hegemony established in Lebanon, Syria will now have to devote its attention to meeting the conflicting interests of the many players:

- The two main allies of Damascus, the Druze and the Shia, have widely differing goals, with the Druze leaning towards their own cantonment, largely autonomous from Beirut, and the Shia seeking a countrywide administration which brings together the Shia in the Bekaa and Beirut and in south Lebanon.
- Syria will not seek to destroy Christian influence in Lebanon since it needs Maronite political and economic support. The Christian right will be at heart anti-Syrian and difficult to deal with.
- Syria will need to prevent pro-Arafat loyalist PLO elements from reinfiltrating into the country and from attacking Syrian-supported rebel PLO groups.
- Iran will seek to move ahead towards sweeping social revolution and the establishment of an Islamic Republic in Lebanon--totally in anathema to Syria. The interests of these two countries will increasingly clash.
- The moderate Shia have their own goals for political and social gain in Lebanon. Many of these gains must come at the expense of the Sunni community which is friendly to Syria and will mightily resist growing Shia power.
- The moderate Shia militia (Amal) have never gotten along with the Palestinians and will be on a largely collision course for the foreseeable future.

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8. In short, Syria will seek to maintain order within Lebanon--a difficult task--for its own purposes. Any effort to get the Syrians through exacerbation of conflict must take into account all the complex factors, gains and losses, outlined above.

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## DCI Background Brief

Lebanon Political Situation

President Gemayel continues to temporize even in the face of the disintegration of much of the Lebanese Army and the complete Druze/Muslim takeover of West Beirut. He remains torn between the need to satisfy his Druze and Shia opponents and the fear of a violent reaction from Christian hardliners if he makes substantial concessions. Army officers and many of Gemayel's advisers reportedly have lost confidence in his ability to make any of the difficult decisions necessary to preserve his government.

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Druze leader Junblatt and Shia leader Barri, emboldened by their military victories, probably will not settle for less than the complete abrogation of the Lebanese-Israeli accord of 17 May and major changes in Lebanon's political system. Their positions have hardened because of Gemayel's inaction and heavy Lebanese Army shelling of Druze villages in the Shuf and Shia neighborhoods in West and South Beirut during the fighting earlier this month.

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Although Barri has suggested that Gemayel could remain in office for perhaps eight more months while a new president is chosen, Junblatt insists that he will not tolerate a continued Gemayel presidency under any circumstances. The opposition clearly is growing impatient with Gemayel's foot-dragging.

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Hardliners in the Christian Phalange and Lebanese Forces, encouraged by Israeli officials, have reaffirmed their unconditional support for the 17 May accord. [redacted] suggests that elements of the Lebanese Forces or Christian officers in the Lebanese Army might try to overthrow or assassinate Gemayel if he moves to accommodate the demands of the Syrian-backed opposition.

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Most Christians doubt that Gemayel will last long and are thinking about alternative political arrangements. Numerous sources report that Christians are considering various schemes to divide the country into Christian, Druze, and Muslim cantons in which each group could govern and protect its own population. Hardliners, such as Lebanese Forces leaders, are confident that Israel would guarantee the safety of a Christian enclave.

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Gemayel refuses to come to terms with the demands of the opposition and Syria largely because he believes US military and diplomatic actions will somehow save his government. Gemayel and his advisers hope that a firm US "red line" will stop the advance of opposition forces. Many Lebanese Government officials, however, are primarily seeking US support to guarantee the security of the Christian heartland, which includes East

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Beirut. In any case, it is unlikely that anything less than an accommodation with Syria can salvage the Gemayel government.

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### Military Situation

The Lebanese Army is close to collapse. Its combat strength is about 9,500, down from nearly 17,000 a month ago. Only half of these are seasoned troops on which the government can rely. The 8th Brigade will probably fold if confronted by a determined Druze/Palestinian attack on the Alayh ridgeline, and may dissolve before. Even supporting US Naval bombardment may not prevent the flight of its demoralized troops.

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If the 8th Brigade falls, there is likely to be close LAF-Lebanese Forces militia cooperation and a frantic scramble to establish defensive positions to protect the Christian heartland with Christian troops. This would force the remaining Muslim soldiers and officers to abandon the government, either to take a neutral stance or to join the opposition.

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Many Muslim soldiers and officers, however, still remain loyal to their units, if not to President Gemayel, and support the concept of a Lebanese central government. The 3rd Brigade under a Sunni commander is loyal to the government and the still loyal Christian-led 8th Brigade is reportedly at least 50 percent Muslim.

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Reports of growing cooperation between the Lebanese Army and the Christian Lebanese Forces, and the closer identification of Christian interests with government interests, however, are polarizing the Army. If a political settlement could be reached before the Army becomes totally divided along religious lines, it could be held together, but very little time is left.

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The Palestinians appear to be preparing, with Syrian approval, for a major attack on the Alayh ridgeline. Syria probably will not unleash a joint Palestinian/Druze offensive, however, unless Gemayel fails to agree to Syrian terms currently being discussed.

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### The Syrian Game Plan

Damascus has made several tactical shifts in the past week, probably to set the stage for discussions with Gemayel on terms most favorable to Syria.

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President Assad appears to have rejected the initial proposals on the grounds that any linkage between the Israeli presence in Lebanon and Syria's troops there was unacceptable to Damascus. [redacted] a "Syrian plan"-- apparently providing for abrogation of the 17 May agreement, a conference to form a government of national unity, and a Syrian-guaranteed cease-fire--will be the basis for a proposed meeting between Gemayel and Assad. [redacted]

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Assad's tactics as a negotiator suggest the Syrian position will remain fluid. Typically, he sets tough conditions to wear down his opponents and then shifts on the brink of failure to keep talks going. Nevertheless, the fundamental of Syrian policy are likely to remain constant. [redacted] the Syrians believe they can better control events in Lebanon if there is a fairly equal balance among the confessional groups. [redacted] Syria will support Gemayel to prevent a total Christian defeat and try to rein in its allies to prevent an opposition victory and possible partition. [redacted]

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### Israeli Options in Lebanon

The sharp deterioration of security conditions in the Shuf and Beirut has intensified domestic pressure on the Israeli Government to unilaterally redeploy its Army in South Lebanon. [redacted]

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The majority view among decisionmakers is that Israeli forces should be removed from the heavily populated areas of South Lebanon to reduce their vulnerability to terrorist acts. At the same time, Israel requires a buffer zone north of the border to prevent concentrated shelling of Israeli towns and infiltration into northern Israel. Most decisionmakers favor a withdrawal to the Zaharani to Litani Rivers. Israel probably would not redeploy its forces in the Bekaa Valley except in return for Syrian commitments to prevent terrorist acts against Israel in South Lebanon. [redacted]

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Tel Aviv would prefer to coordinate any redeployment of its forces with Beirut and Washington and probably will not take unilateral action as long as the 17 May agreement technically remains on the table and the Gemayel government holds together. Prime Minister Shamir has made it clear that if the accord is abrogated, Israel will not be bound by any commitments to Beirut. The withdrawal of the US MNF contingent from Beirut also might reduce the constraints on precipitous Israeli action. [redacted]

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### Airport Security

We expect the Lebanese Army 6th Brigade to take over vacated US Marine positions at Beirut airport. Shia Amal leader Barri stated Tuesday that he would allow the 6th Brigade to assume

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[redacted]

control of the airport and the surrounding access roads. He also said he expects the airport to reopen soon. [redacted]

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Amal militiamen hold most of the checkpoints in the vicinity of the airport and therefore can dictate who controls the airport. Barri is willing to allow the predominantly-Shia 6th Brigade--which refused to fight with the Army during the battle for West Beirut--to control the airport because its Shia commander supports him. [redacted]

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Amal and the 6th Brigade almost certainly can prevent attempts by radical Shias or Palestinians to seize the airport. Attacks by these groups on the Marines during the final phase of redeployment, however, would be more difficult to prevent. [redacted]

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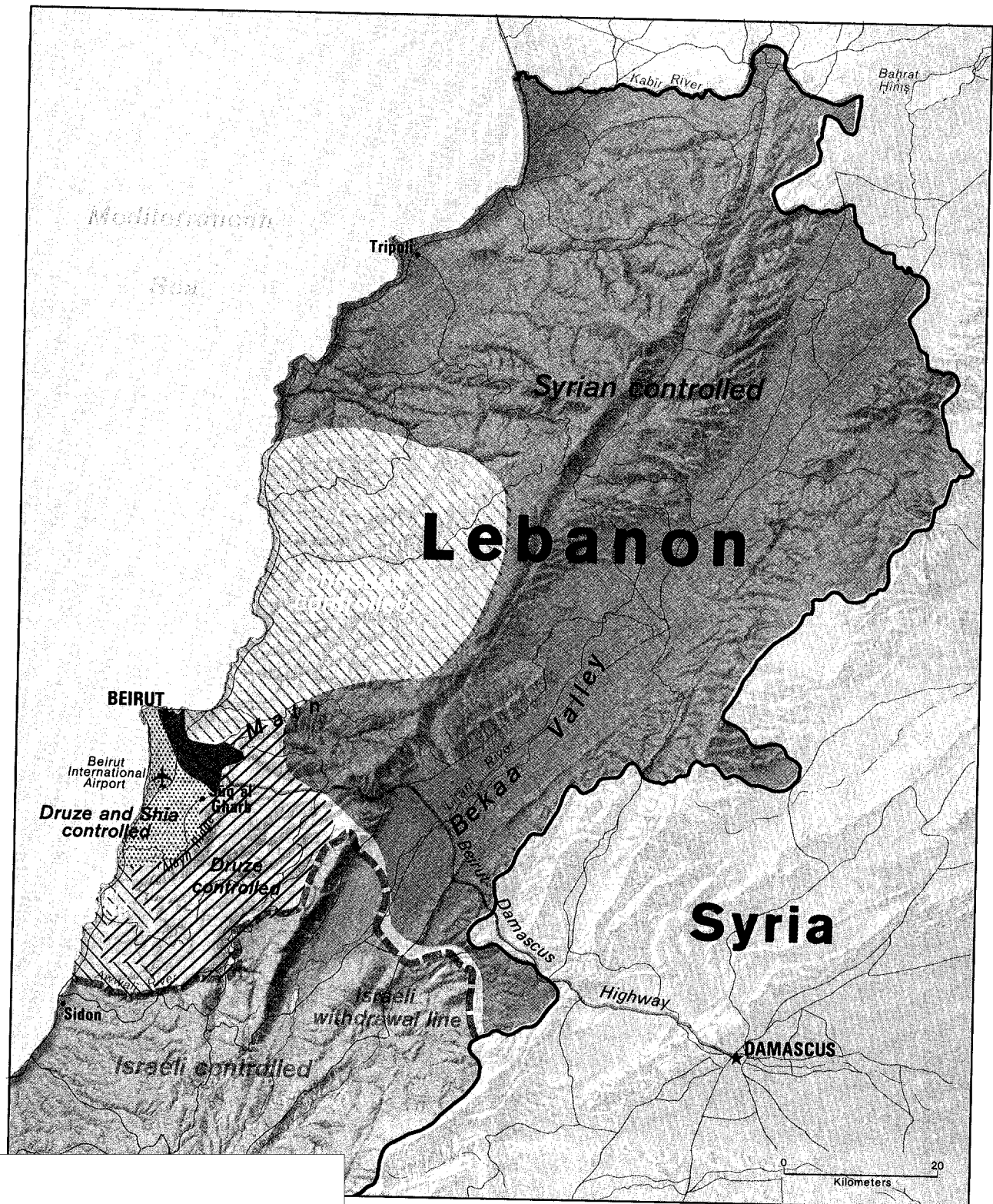
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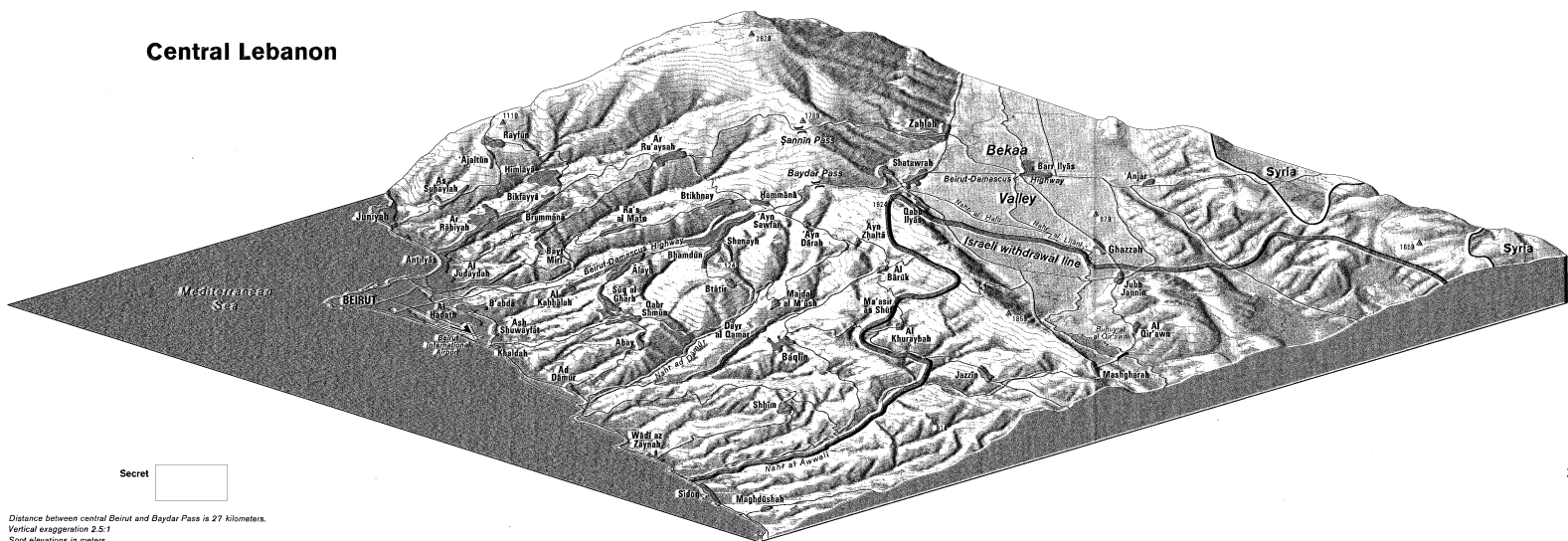
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23 February 1984

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## Central Lebanon





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